CATERPILLAR WORKERS' STRIKE

NI COUNCIL WORKERS FIGHTBACK CONTINUES

MEANWHILE IN BALLYMENA: HATCHETS ARE OUT

BLACK STAR

A las barricadas

As the election campaign heats up here in the wee North, we're told that the main issues are the Protocol or a Border Poll, in other words, the same oul' sectarian shite. The smaller parties' appeals invariably assure the plebs that they will hold Stormont to account, mix it up and represent and/or 'deliver' for our beleaguered communities and workplaces. Meanwhile, workers right across the North have replied 'fuck that, we're taking matters into our own hands', as an unprecedented wave of strikes gather pace.

Meanwhile in Ballymena

Looks like the 'Me Too' movement has landed in Ballymena.

Two fellas in Granville Drive got into an argument with some young 'uns in another car the other week, who they thought were following them. After a few exchanges, a young woman with a hatchet got out the car (wearing the famous red n' black), and 'persuaded' em to fuck aff!

Caterpillar Workers Strike: Pay versus Profit.

Caterpillar workers joined the growing strike movement against below inflation 'pay rises' (in reality pay cuts) across the wee North. It is clear that what has been called the 'cost of living crisis' is driving an intensification of class struggle.

Translink management and the union bureaucracies at UNITE and GMB may have succeeded in averting (at least temporarily) planned strike action on the buses with a re-ballot, but workers are taking and planning strike action across local councils, in education, and school transport. Bin collections, street cleaning and Housing Executive maintenance work will be hit with two week long strike action from Monday 25th April.

With inflation running at between 7.8 and 8.2 percent, amid the massive price hikes, workers at the heavy construction machinery manufacturer Caterpillar held a recent four-day strike against a below inflation offer of 9 percent over two years - tied to compulsory overtime.

Workers mounted well attended picket lines in Belfast and Larne with further four-day strikes planned for April 25th, May 3rd and May 9th. One striking worker was injured after being forced to jump out of the path of an HGV lorry driven recklessly at speed through the picket line.

Caterpillar, one of the world's largest manufacturers of machinery, is a hugely profitable company. Those profits are made with the sweat of their workforce. They are sitting on a cash pile of $9.3 billion while workers face crippling increases to their cost of living. In defence of its loot, the company has been trying to recruit a scab workforce from its management staff in the UK to fill production roles at the Northern Ireland sites.

Boycott P&O!

As P&O attempts to resume 'normal' services we have to make sure not to let them off the hook. The campaign against them has been a bit hit and miss but we have to remember the sheer ruthlessness of P&O Ferries and DP World and the sheer barbarity of this attack on workers. To add insult to injury they have attempted to pay the agency staff replacing the 800 workers they axed less than initially agreed!

BOYCOTT P&O FERRIES!

Strike Wave Across the North!

The strike wave sweeping across Northern Ireland needs to forge links across industries and ensure that these struggles remain firmly in the hands of the workers involved. We need to build the strike movement in order to succeed in this battle against an attack: on one hand from greedy companies seeking to increase their profits by hiking up our bills and on the other by greedy companies seeking to hike their profits by cutting our pay. These fuckers need a sharp reminder that we create the wealth that they have only (temporarily) stolen from us!

Local authority classroom assistants, waste and recycling workers and school bus drivers, fast food delivery workers, university workers and construction machinery workers at Caterpillar have been on strike or are planning strike action.

Local authority workers are preparing strike action over pay claims. Thousands of workers, members of the NIPSA, Unite and Unison, rejected an insulting 1.75% 'offer' late last year. A one-week strike was held last month by school meals staff, school bus drivers and cleansing and bin workers. Unite have conceded a further series of stoppages involving education authority and local government workers between April 25 and May 8. School meals, yellow bus school transport, and some non-teaching and housing executive work will again be impacted.

160 NIPSA education welfare officers took 16 days strike action in March. The longest ever strike by the welfare officers (who are qualified social workers) is in pursuit of pay parity with welfare officers working for the health services - who are paid around £5,000 more annually!

University workers at Queens University and Ulster University are also involved in protracted struggles over pay and pensions.

In March, fast food delivery workers, members of the App Drivers and Couriers Union, took part in the first gig economy strike in the north of Ireland in pursuit of improved pay and conditions.

The potential power of all these workers must be mobilised against the bosses. However the leaderships of Unison, NIPSA, GMB and SIPTU have been stalling action by their members claiming that due to the "forthcoming end of mandate of the current Northern Ireland Executive and Ministers" we had best sit on our hands until after the May 5th elections!

Remember: Solidarity is Strength. Together we can assure each other of victory instead of ever increasing hardship.

JUST BOOKS MAY DAY 'POP-UP SHOP'

On Monday 2nd of May Just Books will be at Artcetera 43b Rosemary Street, Belfast, from 5pm to 9pm. Call by for badges, stickers, pamphlets, books, discussion, networking, solidarity and a cuppa.

Badges, stickers and books and pamphlets on Anarchism, Anarcho-Syndicalism, Anti-Fascism, Anti-Racism, Black Liberation, Communism, Co-operatives, Ecology, Feminism, Kurdistan, Labour History, Palestine, Situationists, Socialism, Workers Control, Zapatistas…

Bakunin, Alexander Berkman, Murray Bookchin, Maurice Brinton, Ward Churchill, Harry Cleaver, Combahee River Collective, Connolly, Angela Davis, Mike Davis, Emma Goldman, Naomi Klein, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Marx, Eamonn McCann, Anton Pannekoek, Victor Serge, Michelle Wallace…

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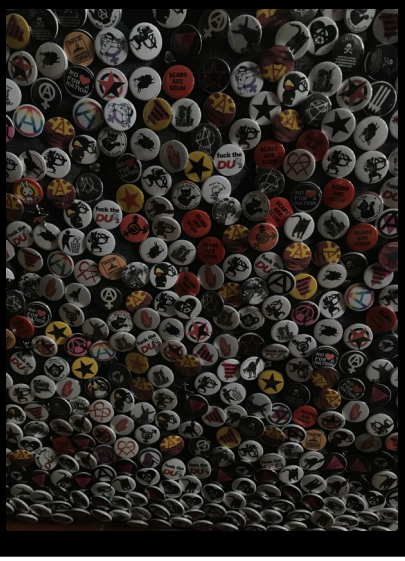

Strike Action Stalled on Translink Buses

Not all is as it seems in the cosy world of trade union and management relations at Translink.

All self-congratulatory in the media the 'new' pay offer from management is the thrice rejected 3% offered unchanged but with a take a £500 quid bung to fuck off. The 'bribe' came with the threat of legal action if workers were not re-balloted!

Regina Coeli occupation

The 11 week long, 24-7 work-in occupation by women workers at Regina Coeli ended with victory, according to Unite, when on 30th March an announcement was made that homeless services will be expanded in the city in May. Unite are now in negotiations to ensure the workers are employed in the new women's hostel.

Organise!

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Get Involved: Help Build An Anarchist Alternative.

Organise! is an anarchist political group in Ireland who take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, particularly those organised on anarcho-syndicalist lines. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small, but growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier…

The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Lisburn, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at https://organiseanarchistsireland.com and send an email to:

organiseasi@gmail.com